

## IDEA Implementation

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, PL 108-446) is a federal law, with state education agency oversight, that supports the provision of public education for all children - regardless of the nature or severity of their disability.

Part B of IDEA mandates the education of children, 3-21 years old, who have a disability that interferes with their educational performance and their ability to benefit from their education program. The law guarantees provision of special education and related services, as necessary, to meet the unique needs of each child.

IDEA defines the components of the process, including referral, evaluation, eligibility determination for special education, creation of measurable goals, and identification of services needed to meet a student's goal.



### Physical Therapy in Frederick County

Frederick County School Based Physical Therapists are licensed by the State of Maryland. In Frederick County therapists are hired by the Frederick County Developmental Center, a division of the Frederick County Health Department

### IDEA RESOURCES

**McEwen IR.** *Providing Physical Therapy Services Under Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).* Alexandria, VA: Section on Pediatrics, American Physical Therapy Association; 2000.

**IDEA practices at [www.ideapractices.org](http://www.ideapractices.org)**

**Office of Special Education Programs at [www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP)**

**To learn more about School-Based PT Services within Frederick County Public School System contact your local school or call Frederick County Developmental Center.**

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# P<sub>hysical</sub> T<sub>herapy</sub>

in

Educational Settings  
Under the Individuals  
with Disabilities  
Education Act



# *Physical Therapy (PT) for School-Aged Children*

**Physical Therapy is one of the related services under Part B of IDEA that may be provided to support a student's Individualized Education Program.**

## **Role of the School-based Physical Therapist**

**School-based PTs** work collaboratively with the student's IEP team and participate in evaluation, program, planning, intervention, and monitoring the outcome of the intervention.

**School-based PTs** assess the gross motor skills of students with atypical development including balance, coordination, posture, and mobility within the school environment. They identify possible architectural barriers; evaluate seating and positioning needs; provide equipment recommendations.

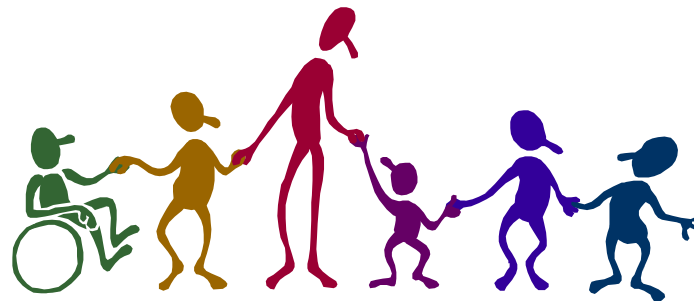
**School-based PTs** help define student strengths and needs and their impact on school performance. Interventions may or may not be provided directly with the student. Collaborating with school staff to modify the student's environment and their daily school activities is always a part of school therapy.

**School-based PTs** help train school staff on ways to incorporate interventions and practice of motor skills into the classroom schedule.

## **Physical Therapy Service Delivery**

If PT is written into the IEP, services may be provided in multiple environments including the classroom, cafeteria, hallway, computer lab or gymnasium.

Physical Therapy is delivered in such a way that allows the student to continue his/her daily education schedule, with the least amount of interruption possible, and the least amount of attention directed toward his/her disability.



## **Dismissal from School Therapy**

The decision to discontinue therapy is made by the IEP team. This may occur when the student is no longer eligible for special education; when other members of the IEP team can provide the necessary interventions; or when the student can perform school tasks without therapeutic intervention.

## **Physical Therapy Services under 504**

PT Services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on a disability for any program receiving federal funds. Students with disabilities who do not qualify for services under IDEA may qualify under Section 504. PTs may be part of the team that determines student's eligibility under 504 and assist in the development of the 504 Plan to help assure access to the school program.



## **Limitations of School-based Physical Therapy Services**

Related services are provided only if required to help a child with a disability to benefit from his/her special education program. A medical diagnosis or motor delay confirmed by evaluation results do not automatically indicate a need for school therapy. There must also be an adverse impact on the student's performance or access to their education. School-based PT is not intended to replace clinic-based PT. Related services will be provided only when identified problem areas directly affect educational performance that cannot be addressed appropriately by the school staff.